

# City of Toronto Climate Advisory Group Annual Report 2023



# Land Acknowledgement

The City of Toronto acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. The City also acknowledges that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Williams Treaties signed with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa bands.

# Message from the Climate Advisory Group Co-Chairs

We are pleased to report on our first full year as the City of Toronto Climate Advisory Group (CAG). The CAG plays an important role in the city's engagement with the community to implement the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy.

The CAG is composed of representatives from many different sectors, including members of diverse backgrounds and ages. We bring together people with technical expertise and experience in buildings, energy, transportation, waste, resilience, and nature-based solutions. We also include representatives of community organizations who bring a range of perspectives to the development of strategic directions for the Net Zero Strategy.

Toronto will be entering the final year of the existing 2022-2025 Short-Term Implementation Plan for TransformTO, with a target of a 45% reduction in emissions from 1990 levels. The CAG is now actively working with staff to provide input on the next five-year plan that will run from 2026 - 2030, focused on the next target of a 65% reduction in emissions by 2030. This is a goal that can only be reached with the involvement of community members from across the city. We look forward to working in partnership with city staff across departments and all our communities to achieve this target, in ways that improve and strengthen our city and its many neighbourhoods.

We see the work as just beginning, full of challenges, but also full of opportunities. We recognize, as well, that everyone needs to be on board to put in the work to make that possible. As such, one of our roles as CAG members is as a bridge between the public and city staff, mapping pathways to transform our city so each neighbourhood can thrive, long-term, for all residents. We encourage you to get involved this year as the City creates a new and ambitious Short-Term Action Plan, towards our goal of achieving a low-carbon and sustainable future, together.

**Lyn Adamson and Maggie Chang**

Co-Chairs, City of Toronto Climate Advisory Group

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# Executive Summary

The City of Toronto Climate Advisory Group (CAG) was established in the fall of 2022. It includes 25 members representing diverse communities, sectors, ages, and backgrounds and includes individuals from the buildings, energy, transportation, waste, resilience, labour, academic and community engagement sectors, along with individual members. The CAG members collectively act as advisors and champions for climate action and the policies, programs and initiatives being developed by the City of Toronto for implementation of the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy.

The TransformTO Net Zero Strategy triggers new and accelerated implementation actions to drive down community-wide emissions, particularly in the short term, and establishes the trajectory needed to reach net zero by 2040. The targets and actions presented in the strategy were developed through extensive research and consultation across City Divisions and Agencies, stakeholders and the public. The Net Zero Strategy, with one of the most ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets in North America, was approved by Toronto City Council in December 2021.



*CAG members and City staff at the December 2022 meeting*

# Executive Summary

This document provides a summary of the CAG accomplishments and activities in 2023, which include the following:

- Meeting #2023-1: March 8, 2023
- Meeting #2023-2: June 8, 2023
- Meeting #2023-3: September 14, 2023
- Meeting #2023-4: December 7, 2023
- Optional briefing on the 2023 Environment & Climate Division budget, City budget process and Carbon Budget process.
- Half-day orientation workshop focused on Climate & Equity

Throughout 2023, the CAG discussed and provided advice and feedback on the following topics.

- Equity in Climate and Resilience
- Electric Vehicles: Public EV Charging Network Study
- Communications and outreach for TransformTO NetZero Strategy
- Existing Buildings: Emissions Performance Standards (EPS)
- Introduction to the Environment & Climate Division Annual Budget and Update on Carbon Budget Processes
- Indigenous Engagement and Indigenous Climate Action Grants

# Executive Summary

While the CAG input was specific to each topic, common themes across all areas of advice include the following:

- **Ensure that equity principles are central in all policies, strategies and tactics.** This includes considering the needs of different groups when developing solutions to advance the NetZero strategy and ensuring equitable access to these solutions.
- **Prioritize inclusive engagement to accelerate progress towards NetZero.** This means connecting climate action to issues that people care about, providing education and helping people make connections between individual and collective action.
- **Transparency, predictability and accountability support residents and stakeholders to participate in climate action.** For example, climate policy development should provide clear information and direction to support ongoing engagement, action and decision-making.

In addition to the quarterly meetings, the CAG began establishing working groups, with the intention of collaborating and working between the quarterly meetings to provide more detailed and focused input in specific subject-matter areas.

# Climate Advisory Group Background & Overview

## The Climate Advisory Group (CAG) is:

- A non-legislative committee;
- Accountable to and acting under the authority of the Executive Director of the Environment & Climate Division;
- An advisory body. It may not direct City staff or make binding decisions for the City. Any advice or recommendations that require formal action or implementation by City of Toronto staff must be considered and approved by City Council.

## The purpose of the CAG is to:

- Provide advice and peer review from Toronto's diverse communities to inform community-wide implementation of the TransformTO Net Zero Strategy and the Short-term Implementation Plans;
- Ensure ongoing two-way information sharing and collaboration between the City and external parties; and
- Help mobilize all sectors and communities to move toward our shared goal of a zero-carbon, healthy, equitable, prosperous and resilient Toronto.

The CAG advises City staff and liaises with the Executive Director of E&C, who provides a connection to senior leadership at the City. The Advisory Group may also provide input through representation at other City climate-focused meetings or advisory groups, such as the Net Zero Climate Leadership Table and Joint TransformTO Implementation Committee.

The City of Toronto Environment & Climate Division (E&C) acts as a Secretariat for the CAG with support from third-party facilitators, Groundswell Projects.





# Topics of Discussion, Advice Provided and Outcomes for 2023

# Equity in Climate and Resilience: CAG Orientation Session

## Overview and summary of discussion

The topic of Equity in Climate and Resilience was the focus of the second CAG orientation session in February 2023. The CAG discussed how climate change and climate actions impact equity, and learned about member's experiences, and the City of Toronto's efforts around equity and climate action, including engagement with Black, Indigenous and other equity-deserving communities.

## CAG Member Advice & Feedback

The CAG felt that equity should be a grounding principle for engaging communities in climate action. For example, considering that different communities have varying time and capacity available to participate in civic engagement processes, or developing strategies to create space for a more inclusive definition of climate action that reflects a diversity of experiences. There was interest in deepening connections between equity and resilience work and more discussion on how land use planning decisions impact equity.

## Follow-up action by the City of Toronto

This discussion took place during an orientation session with a goal of ensuring the CAG is well-equipped as a group to apply an equity lens in CAG meetings and discussions.

# Electric Vehicles: Public EV Charging Network Study

## Overview and summary of discussion

The Public Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Network Study was discussed at the March 2023 CAG meeting. The CAG then heard an update on upcoming outreach and engagement around the plan.

The Public EV Charging Study is a comprehensive study that will help ensure public charging is available across Toronto when and where it's needed.

## CAG Member Advice & Feedback

CAG members offered the following considerations for the Public EV Charging Plan.

- Include consideration of multiple road users through the equity lens;
- Integrate EV charging with pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure; and
- Ensure equitable access to EV charging infrastructure.

## Follow-up action by the City of Toronto

The feedback and insights from CAG members highlighted the importance of planning and deploying public EV charging in ways that harmonize with and support active transportation and transit (and do not encourage the use of personal vehicles over these modes) and that increase equitable access to low carbon mobility. These key considerations were incorporated into messaging for public engagement on public EV charging (in September 2023) and will be included in a report to City Council in 2024.

# Communications and outreach for TransformTO NetZero Strategy

## Overview and summary of discussion

Communication and outreach efforts are integral components to TransformTO's Net Zero strategy and are essential to achieving the City of Toronto's Net Zero targets in the coming years.

The City of Toronto Strategic Public and Employee Communications team invited the CAG's input on communicating the urgency of the climate challenges and the actions residents and stakeholders can take.

## CAG Member Advice & Feedback

- Go beyond climate: speak to people where they are at and what they care about;
- Use multiple channels to reach diverse audiences;
- Situate and connect individual action in the context of system-level action;
- Encourage and support collective action;
- Communicate the complexity of climate issues;
- Address financial benefits and affordability; and
- Measure the impact of communications on how people take action.

## Follow-up action by the City of Toronto

The CAG Communications and Engagement Working Group which includes the Environment & Climate Division's Outreach and Engagement Unit staff, have identified key themes to pursue based on this initial discussion:

- Developing a scan of climate and resilience engagement at the community level;
- Developing a better understanding of how to "speak to people where they are at;" and
- Providing further advice on climate and resilience engagement and communications at the City.

# Existing Buildings: Emissions Performance Standards (EPS)

## Overview and summary of discussion

Buildings represent the largest source of GHG emissions in Toronto today, accounting for 56 per cent of total community-wide emissions.

The CAG learned about the development of proposed bylaws for building EPS and emissions performance reporting, along with upcoming stakeholder engagement meant to inform the EPS process. The CAG provided feedback on how the EPS may impact or support their organization or community.

## CAG Member Advice & Feedback

- The Existing Buildings Strategy and EPS provide clarity and direction for the buildings sector on achieving the 2040 milestones.
- Ensure the roll out of the EPS includes inclusive engagement.
- Recognize, engage and support energy advisors, contractors and installers as climate champions in advancing emissions reductions.
- Engage youth of all ages.
- Engage homeowners through education, support and accessible incentives.
- Consider the impact of specific institutional and jurisdictional policies.

## Follow-up action by the City of Toronto

City staff incorporated this feedback into the development of the Energy and Water Reporting By-law and the public consultation strategy for EPS. It is anticipated that the CAG (in particular, the working group) will be asked to provide additional input on the stakeholder engagement process, along with the draft components of the EPS process. Staff are seeking to apply an equity lens to the work, such that impacts on tenants, lower-income residents and equity-deserving communities will be identified and mitigated.

# Introduction to the Environment & Climate Division Annual Budget and Update on Carbon Budget Process

## Overview and summary of discussion

In 2024, the Carbon Budget Prioritization Process began to operate on an annual cycle in tandem with the preparation of the financial budget.

The carbon budget establishes a process aligned with the annual financial budget cycle process to improve accountability for the City's climate objectives. This approach aims to make information more transparent for stakeholders and residents, particularly regarding emission budgets.

## CAG Member Advice & Feedback

The December 2023 meeting provided an orientation to the CAG on the E&C budget and the carbon budget processes and collected questions from the CAG. These questions will be addressed at the special CAG sessions in mid-January and mid-February 2024.

## Follow-up action by the City of Toronto

The CAG provided valuable input to staff on the City's Carbon Budget process, helping to confirm that the City's approach was rooted in the right principles (transparency, accountability, predictability, and quantification where possible) and that the approach would be useful to the work that members and their organizations undertake. As a result of these discussions, staff have included the CAG in the by-law as a body to be consulted on key plans going forward.

# Indigenous Engagement and Indigenous Climate Action Grants

## Overview and summary of discussion

The CAG learned about E&C's work to engage Indigenous community members in climate action at the December 2023 meeting.

The Indigenous Climate Action Grants Program is an important part of advancing the implementation of the City's [TransformTO Net Zero Strategy](#) and [Reconciliation Action Plan](#). The initiative marks an important shift towards collaborative efforts with Indigenous community members and actively supporting Indigenous-led climate and environment initiatives.

## CAG Member Advice & Feedback

The CAG discussion identified several learnings on engaging Indigenous communities in climate action:

- The importance of building trusting relationships with Indigenous-led organizations grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing.
- Indigenous perspectives can help redefine climate action to align with Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding.
- Engaging Indigenous people in staff roles is important to be able to support Indigenous communities in the ways that are expected.

## Follow-up action by the City of Toronto

The City had initially planned to recruit one or more members of local Indigenous communities or organizations to sit on the CAG. However, during the recruitment process, input was provided to staff indicating that another approach should be considered that is more aligned with advice from the Indigenous Affairs Office and the Reconciliation Action Plan. Staff in E&C will work in 2024 to continue internal engagement to ensure meaningful interactions are included as part of ongoing input into the next TransformTO Implementation Plan.



# Climate Advisory Group Collaborative Processes





# Climate Advisory Group Co-Chairs

Co-Chairs are elected by the members at the first meeting. Their role is to support the liaison, engagement and communication with the CAG members by acting as the primary contact, checking-in with members, and coordinating and gathering feedback.

The Co-Chairs may also represent the CAG externally, for example, at other City climate-focused meetings or advisory groups, such as the Net Zero Climate Leadership Table and Joint TransformTO Implementation Committee, and in media releases and other communications.

The Co-Chair role was co-developed by the CAG members and is included in the CAG Terms of Reference, which will be reviewed and updated annually, or as needed.

2023 CAG Co-Chairs are Maggie Chang, Individual Member and Lyn Adamson, Co-Founder, Climate Fast.

# CAG Working Groups

Working Groups enable CAG members to work together in a focused way in between the quarterly CAG meetings on specific issues related to the implementation of TransformTO NetZero Strategy. Working Groups are established by CAG members, on a voluntary basis, by submitting a proposal that outlines proposed mandate, objectives and membership of the group and the resources required. The establishment of Working Groups includes engaging City of Toronto staff from the relevant Division to ensure feedback is incorporated into the City's work, and that the outcomes are actionable. All working groups are reviewed and approved at the discretion of the Executive Director of the Environment & Climate Division.

## **Established Working Groups:**

- Buildings and Energy Transitions
- Communications and Engagement

## **Working Groups Under Development:**

- Waste Diversion
- Working with Other Levels of Government
- Climate Resilience
- Transportation

# Conclusion and Outlook for 2024

In addition to the scheduled quarterly meetings in 2024, the CAG will begin working on reviewing the City's TransformTO Net Zero Strategy Annual Report and contributing to the next TransformTO Net Zero Strategy Short-term Implementation Plan for 2026-2030. In preparation for this, CAG members will be invited to participate in two optional sessions and two deep dive workshops. The first optional session will focus on reviewing the Climate Budget Baseline Briefing Note, while the second will review the City of Toronto and the Toronto Atmospheric Fund Greenhouse Gas inventories. The first deep dive workshop will focus on a review of the [Annual TransformTO Net Zero Strategy Progress and Accountability Report](#) for 2023, which was released in March 2024, including the status of the existing Short Term Implementation Plan for 2022-2025. City staff will collect feedback from CAG members and incorporate it into the annual reporting process going forward. These additional sessions will equip the CAG with a robust understanding of the current state and progress in advancing TransformTO Net Zero goals to engage in the second deep dive workshop on the update of the TransformTO Net Zero modelling and development of the next (2026-2030) implementation plan.

Additional discussions and opportunities for input will be facilitated through the regular quarterly and working group meetings. Meeting agendas and summaries are posted publicly on the TransformTO website.

# Climate Advisory Group Members (2023)

1. Lyn Adamson (Co-Chair), Co-Founder, Climate Fast
2. Maggie Chang (Co-Chair), Individual member
3. Andria Babbington, President, Toronto and York Region Labour Council
4. Chris Ballard, CEO, Passive House Canada
5. Lanrick Bennett, Jr., Our Greenway
6. Sarah Buchanan, Campaigns Director, Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA)
7. David Campbell, Associate VP, Policy & Research, Toronto Region Board of Trade
8. Richard Carlson, Director, Energy & Exchange, Pollution Probe
9. Maria Constantinou, Individual member
10. Kristen Evers, Green Projects Team Leader, Toronto District School Board
11. Lidia Ferreira, Community Engagement Specialist, Community Resilience to Extreme Weather (CREW)
12. Barnabe Geis, Executive Director, Foresight Canada
13. Colin Guldemann, Individual member
14. Tinashe Kanengoni, Individual member
15. Julius Lindsay, Director, Sustainability, David Suzuki Foundation
16. Joyce McLean, Individual member
17. Neil McNeil, Director, Toronto Region Operations, Enbridge Gas Inc.
18. Joseph Ogilvie, Individual member
19. Rosemarie Powell, Executive Director, Toronto Community Benefits Network
20. Zamani Ra, Individual member
21. Jeff Ranson, Director, Responsible Development, Northcrest Developments
22. John Robinson, Individual member
23. Alienor Rougeot, Co-Founder, Fridays for Future
24. Marine Sanchez, Passive House Buildings Lead, RDH Building Science
25. Zack Zhou, Partner, A&J Energy Consultants

# Membership Updates

Some CAG members departed the group in 2023, either due to internal changes within their organization or because they took up new work positions and no longer met the eligibility requirements for CAG members.

## Outgoing members:

- Darnel Harris, Our Greenway
- Derek May, Pollution Probe
- Craig Ruttan, Toronto Region Board of Trade
- Neil MacNeil, Enbridge Gas Inc.
- Christian Cianfrone, Ellis Don

## Incoming members:

- Lanrick Bennett, Jr., Our Greenway
- Richard Carlson, Pollution Probe
- David Campbell, Toronto Region Board of Trade
- Cara-Lynne Wade, Enbridge Gas Inc.

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Please visit [toronto.ca/transformto](https://toronto.ca/transformto) for more information.

